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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

THE DIRECTOR OF INTELLIGENCE AND RESEARCH

October 21, 1962

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MEMORANDUM FOR: The Secretary

FROM: INR - Roger Hilsman

SUBJECT: Soviets Skirt Issue of Cuban
Missile Buildup

We have analyzed recent private conversations
between high American and Soviet officials:

A
systematic Soviet effort to avoid making the Cuban
buildup the subject of a direct US-Soviet con-
frontation has impressed us as an important element
in these conversations, and we wish to bring this
to your attention in view of its policy implications.

Soviet Awareness of US Knowledge

Prior to any of these conversations the Soviet
Union must have been aware of the fact that their
deployment was at least generally known to the US.

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Moscow may well hope to avoid becoming overly committed to counteractions which it may not wish to take in response to vigorous US response to the Cuban buildup, and thus leave its hands free for negotiation and, if faced with extreme danger of war, for withdrawal with the least loss of face.

Implications for US Policy

We believe that US policy should take into account this apparent Soviet desire to avoid a direct US-Soviet confrontation on the Cuban issue.

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